

MAHĀRĀSHTRA
OF THE
SHIVASHĀHĪ PERIOD
(Seventeenth Century)

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PREFACE

The Śivaśāhī period, or the seventeenth century, witnessed a great social as well as political upheaval in Mahārāṣṭra. Removal of ignorance and inferiority complex, then influencing the minds of the masses, was the need of the day. Śivājī foresaw and remedied it with a view to imbining in them the true national spirit. He educated the masses in right spirit of religion and uplifted them socially. It was thus a period of social and religious renaissance in Mahārāṣṭra, and we come across with ample proof of this movement in the writings of Pandits like Keshava and in the various decisions or Niwādās given by the Court of Śivājī in religious disputes. The natural result of these efforts was visible in the solid support given to Śivājī and his successors by the masses in the establishment of the *Hindavi Swarājya*—national government—in Mahārāṣṭra.

This aspect of Śivājī's life has not been dealt with fully before. Pending a detailed discussion on the subject, I preferred inserting a brief review in my "Daṇḍanītiprakaraṇam" of Keshavabhatta. Many of my friends and readers, however, desired me to get the review published independently so as to attract scholars' particular attention to the study of this aspect of Śivājī's life. I am grateful for the kind assistance of my publisher in complying with the request of my colleagues.

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The true national history will record the seventeenth century as the most important period of great social, as well as political, upheaval in Mahārāṣṭra. The policy adopted by the State is reflected in the actions of its officers, and the data so far recorded in regard to the life and doings of Keśavabhaṭa¹ afford ample contemporary evidence to show how this upheaval was brought about. A review of the condition of the people of his times will, no doubt, prove interesting and thought-provoking. Āindryābhiśekā² performed by Śivājī is clearly indicative of the idea with which he lifted the masses to the higher level of the society and worked up the building of the Hindavi Swarājya in the Deccan.

1. Keśava Paṇḍit was Purohit of Śivājī, Sambhājī and Rājārām (1635-97 A.D.) and author of "Rājārāmcharitam," "Dharmakalpalatā", etc. For his life, please see "Keśava Paṇḍita's Daṇḍanītiprakaraṇam or Criminal Jurisprudence (XVIIth century)" by V. S. Bendrey, B. I. S. Maṇḍal Sweeya Series, No. 59, 1943.

2. "Coronations of Śivājī" is still under print, in which the whole procedure followed in both the śāstric and tāntric or jāpaka vidhīs, is given and the significance of Āindryābhiśeka, etc., discussed.

POLITICAL AND ECONOMICAL

Hilly Country : Fortified base of Shivaji's activities

Śivāji first gathered strength in the hilly country of the Māwals and had his independent power firmly established in a still more difficult part of the Konkan. It gradually expanded in the western and southern parts of the present Bombay Province. The territory contained a few small towns but hardly a centre of trade or learning or a place of religious importance. The villages were very small and far between. The communication was difficult, and nature was chiefly relied upon for conveniences. In short, this part of the country was rather the abandoned or perhaps the most neglected tract of the Deccan. The only tie between the villagers and the Deccani Sultanats was the Deshmukh or Sardeshmukh, who enjoyed unrestricted and uncontrolled freedom. The masses in these tracts had thus no direct contact with the more advanced civil life of the capital towns or influence of the centres of prosperity and learning. The territory acquired by Śivāji in the early part of his life was backward politically, difficult physically and very poor economically, though it was self-sufficient for the bare needs of livelihood. The masses here never felt the power or the rule of the Sultāns.

Dissensions among Sultans : an opportunity for Marathas' rising to power

The first quarter of the seventeenth century witnessed the downfall of the Nizāmshāhī Kingdom. Malik Ambar was perhaps the last astute statesman in the Deccani Sultanats. He did realise the danger in the ruinous

policy then adopted by the Sultāns, and tried to place the Muslim rule in the Deccan in awe and respect. He was, however, followed by no Muslim officer able to pursue his policy and work. On the contrary, the narrow vision maintained by the Muslim neighbours compelled him to raise Hindus to power and office. This gave opportunity to Hindus to assert the balancing power they held. They supported the cause of Nizāmshāhī loyally, and though their attempts were unsuccessful, they were not deterred from their ambition for power. They struggled and exercised the power of balance. They duly perceived the inherent weakness of the foreign rule. Murār Jagdevrāo, Lakhji Jādhavrāo and Śāhaji forced the Sultāns to realise their importance and power by their defiance to one Sultān or the other or rather, more accurately, by playing off the Muslim powers against one another. Masses followed and believed their own leaders. The isolated Muslim officers, playing in the hands of their Hindu assistants, gradually slackened their hold over the masses. The Muslim rulers had entertained the Muslim executive exclusively. A change in this attitude became inevitable. This change lessened the enmity and put off immediate danger to the Sultāns to some extent, but it broke the steel frame of the Muslim rule in the Deccan.

Famine disintegrated foreign rule

The conditions were further aggravated by the most devastating effects of the great famine of 1630-33, called "Durgādevīchā Duṣkāḷa". The Muslim officials withdrew to the capital towns leaving their charges to assistants. The Muslim contact with the masses was thus lost. The Deshmukhs or Sardeshmukhs found it impossible to fulfil their usual annual obligations to the Sultāns. The heavy casualties and desertion of villages

by the people in search of food and safety laid the country waste. As a consequence, the decade after the famine witnessed hundreds of disputes for restoration of ownership. In short, the second quarter of the century was thus a period of discontent and laxity in the control of the State. Loyalty to the Sultāns was much shaken, and without loyalty no foreign rule was ever secure. This was, therefore, an opportunity for Śivājī to consolidate his own power and strength by taking advantage of the very weaknesses and wants which caused the severance of the bonds between the ruler and the ruled.

Crusade against Deshmukhs : Foundation of Hindavi Swarajya

Śivājī opened his career with a crusade against the Deshmukhi system, replacing it by a very sound and assuring land tenure settlement for the village agriculturists. This endeared him to the masses. The loss of the Deshmukhi rights was not, however, a pleasant sacrifice, but the Deshmukhs were not the less eager to be relieved of their obligations to the Sultāns. On the other hand, Śivājī entertained no personal envy or individual revenge against the Deshmukhs. He offered them offices under him according to their valour and merit, and provided them with better opportunities and prospects. This attracted most of them to the Hindavi Swarājya or "Mahārāstra-Dharma" as it was then understood socially.

Loot of rich cities : Source of finance

The Sultanats could afford to keep these tracts completely neglected, but to overlook the danger of the power gathering strength to challenge the very existence of the Sultāns would have been ruinous and fatal. On the other hand, for the security of the people and the produce, Śivājī devoted his particular attention and care to the building up of the internal defence and organisation of a loyal and faithful military. The defence, however, absorbed all the wealth acquired by means of the daring incursions into the rich neighbouring trade centres and towns. If the Mahajars published are eloquent enough of the ruin and desertion of the people due to the famine, the Beheḍās of the time explain pretty clearly how the defence involved a large expenditure on repairs and rebuilding of the forts and walls to save the country from the enemy's wrath.

Regional language : the administrative medium

The civil administration demanded an immediate change both in the tone and in the procedure. The medium of official correspondence was practically the localised Persian with either Modi or Persian script adopted for the convenience and ease of the Muslim officials. The regional language must replace it, but to introduce and give currency to the appropriate Marathi terms, which were lost through their disuse for centuries in the past, was by no means an easy task.

Jurisprudence

It is true that Muslims did not interfere in the form and procedure of the administration of the law and order

in the country. The preferential treatment to Muslims and the mixed customs then current, however, exercised no less effect on the actual administration of the civil and criminal justice. The idiosyncrasies of the two great communities stimulated some differences in the application of the Canon Law, and these differences often interfered in the administration of the Common Law of the people. Śivāji's attempts to bring about a practical solution in order to systematize the procedure for trial and to regularise the punishment were not completely successful. The traditional mode of compilation of such codes restricted their scope to moral precepts and to the recording of ancient maxims at least so far as the criminal jurisprudence was concerned. The models in the Muslim Fatawāhs and the European "sets of rules" made no impression on the Hindu writers of Nīti-Dharma to move them to improve the practical utility of the codes or to adapt them so as to suit the then current notions about crime and punishment.

Āindryabhisheka : a democratic institution

The third quarter of the century was the period of action and reforms. It evidenced the remarkable cultural advance of the neglected and isolated masses of the Māwals and the Konkan. Their contact with the life outside the hills encouraged them to action and created confidence in their achievements. To keep this confidence steady, it was necessary to allow no confederates to be formed or gains staked simply for prestige and honour. The last year of this quarter was perhaps the most important. It gave his "personal conquests" a final finish and converted them into a "public institution" accomplished and sanctified by religious sanction and popular

support. The coronation made the people and the ambitious leaders to banish from their minds any idea of rival claims for superiority or leadership.

Merit and not caste or birth for State service

Śivājī took care to select and maintain the right type of machinery for his administration. Merit alone counted for service. Some interested but later writers affirm that Śivājī recognised hereditary rights to higher offices, but the contemporary evidence does not support this. His particular caution and ability were responsible for checking rivalries among his officers. No differential treatment or status was accorded to any department or office simply on the ground of utility or profit. The equity of treatment so maintained had the good effect of securing expert and undivided attention to the duties of the State ; but to hold such an expert and able machinery under one's thumb requires a stern hand and firm discretion. Śivājī and Saṃbhājī could exercise this check effectively, but the weak person of Rājārām could not. The tone of the administration so built up was consequently deteriorated in the last decade of the century. The Mahārāṣṭra Rāj, as a state, thus temporarily succumbed although it continued in existence as a mere government of a few persons accidentally placed in charge of it.

Rajaram's weak control

In the last quarter of the century the family quarrels were growing stronger and stronger. Parties were being formed. The danger of these party feuds becoming fatal to the very existence of the Mahārāṣṭra Rāj was apparent. At the same time, the heaviest blow was delivered by Aurangzeb, but the Marāṭhā kingdom withstood all the

odds against it. The leadership of Sambhājī was stern, strong and sound. His unfortunate capture, however, left the kingdom in chaos and the leadership passed into the hands of Pralhād Nirājī—an unsound, unreliable and non-military person. A strong military talent was a necessity. Rāmchandrāpantā and Śaṅkarājī asserted some strategy and statesmanship played by the Maḥarājās previously, but the youngsters on whose help they had to rely, though valorous and adventurous, were lacking in experience in politics and leadership. This caused a serious set back for a short period. The kingdom was, however, well founded and elastic enough not to suffer a complete break-down especially at the hands of outsiders. At the close of the century, the Maḥarāṣṭra Rāj, as a seat of national independence, existed with perhaps a stronger force and unity, but the Rāj, as a state, crumbled.

Shivaji's administrative reforms

Śivājī, in spite of his occupation in his incessant struggles for political supremacy and expansion, gave considerable time and energy to internal reforms. He encouraged literature on subjects of direct public utility. Paramānanda's "Śivabhārata", Jayarāma's "Parvāṭa-parvatāgrahapākhyāna" and others mentioned, but yet to be discovered, are the instances of the works designed to impress upon and to create confidence in the public in his achievements and power. "Rājyavyavahārika" by Raghunāth Haṇamante, the detailed "Jībātī" issued by Śivājī and the then recorded copies of "Mātrikā" afforded facilities and ease in the use of the medium of the regional language for correspondence and administration. Anājī Datto's land revenue settlement was popular even until the end of the Peshwā period. Almost

all the forts in the Sahyādrī range played the most important role in the establishment of the Marāṭhā Rājya, and the organisation of defence, the selection of the personnel and the practical skill and strength with which the bulwarks were repaired, had always a tale to tell with pride and honour. In brief, personal attention and care bestowed by Śivājī upon the most neglected parts of the country achieved the aim of making this tract a stronghold of the Marāṭhā Rājya both politically and economically.

SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS

Religious and social life of Hindus deteriorated in Maharashtra

Perhaps it was the last exodus of Āryans into the Deccan which constituted itself later into a Marāṭhī speaking Hindu community. In the midst of the Dravidian culture and influence, it struggled for supremacy under the Yādava principality. The country over which the Mahrāṭṭās, now known as a Scytho-Dravidian race, were scattered was, however, very limited in extent. Allā-ud'din Khilji (1310-16 A.D.) plundered the Yādava capital of Deogiri (Daulatābād), and his general, Malik Kāfur, with his formidable armies, made devastating incursions into the distant parts of the Deccan and Konkan driving the Mahrāṭṭās westward. The subsequent Muslim kings pushed them further still, forcing them to take shelter in the hills of Sahyādri and the jungles of the Konkan. The later Nizāmshāhī and some Ādilshāhī kings showed some tolerance to the faith, if not to the symbols of the Hindu religion. Thus encouraged to seek their safety under the Sultanats, the Mahrāṭṭās concentrated themselves round about Poona, Karad and Ahmednagar. The Māwals and Konkan, however, remained their chief abode. The religious persecution of Malik Kāfur laid the temples and seats of Hindu learning and literature under complete ruin. The later Deccani Sultāns also discouraged, if not directly forbade, open performance of their religious rites. The Mahrāṭṭās living in the distant impregnable hills enjoyed freedom of action to some

extent ; but the surrounding influence of Dravidian and aboriginal tribes was very great indeed. The rise of the Muslim power in the north had practically cut off Mahrāttās from the main body of the Āryan society and its influence. This isolation impaired their religious solidarity and corrupted their culture. Their subjugation to dependence and reduction to penury practically made any effort impossible to polish their customs and manners, to erect new temples of worship or to establish authoritative seats of learning and literature. On the contrary, the local crude element continued to affect their religious beliefs and to deteriorate their modes of life and social practices. Thus, until the ascendancy of Murār Jagdevrāo and Śāhājī to power, Mahrāttās could exercise no freedom in the conduct of their religious and social life.

Hindus given to non-Aryan life and practices

The Hinduism practised by Mahrāttās had imbibed the teachings of Śaṅkarāchārya, but he exercised no jurisdiction over the Mahrāttā country and people till the end of the seventeenth century. The later Brahminism permitted several native races to enter into the fold of Hinduism ; but the orthodox Brahmins showed every possible reluctance to allow the Śūdra or even the other Dwija castes any social intercourse with themselves or to share in their religious convictions and ceremonial practices. On the contrary, they shut them from any participation in their higher aims. Instead of raising the standard of spiritual life of the non-Brahmin masses for the general uplift of the Hindu society as a whole and for the advancement of the Hindu culture in parti-

cular, the orthodox Brahmins deliberately threw all kinds of artificial barriers in their way. They used all means to force the non-Brahmin castes and tribes to give up imitating their customs and manners or to adopt such practices and modes of worship as would elevate the ignorant masses or communities to higher intellectual culture and religious sentiment with a view to procure social equality. This illiberal policy was the result mainly of their lack of confidence in their own conduct of life and the fear of their being contaminated with obnoxious practices of the servile races. This self-imposed segregation obliged the orthodox Brahminism to wink at, or ignore, all manner of gross superstitions and repulsive practices, along with the popular worship of countless gods, goddesses, hosts of godlings, demons, spirits and ghosts, and mystic objects and symbols of every description being made a part of Hindu worship and ideal of their religious creed. Almost the whole mass of the Hindu society, save the very small minority of the orthodox Brahmins, who acknowledged, though nominally, the spiritual guidance of Brahminism, were practically given over to the worship of their nondescript grāma-devatās usually attended by animal sacrifices and crude types of invocation. New deities were being brought into existence. A dream at night would justify converting anything into an object of local adoration or superstition; awe and propitiatory rites to multitudes of people. So any uncommon event would be apt to be set down to a special manifestation of divine power; and any man or woman—whether a Hindu, a non-Aryan, a Firangi or a Muslim—credited with exceptional merit or achievement, or even remarkable for some strange incident connected with his conduct of life or with the occurrence of his death, might ultimately be regarded as a true incarnation.

of the deity. The transmigration theory, according to which the spirit of the departed is believed to hover about in quest of a new corporeal abode, supported the conception of the superstitious notions of this kind. In Brahminism, Śiva, Viṣṇu and other gods of the Hindu Pantheon were dignified beings. No direct worship of many of them in public temples, except by Brahmins or Guravas or through their offices, was permitted even to other Dvija castes. The differential treatment each individual caste had to suffer in the matter of the mantrās used, the modes of worship adopted and the unreal communion allowed, could not but excite indignation and contempt. On the other hand, the village deities afforded ready help in trouble and appeared to be intimately concerned with the happiness and prosperity of the villages. The devotee, irrespective of his caste or sex, could offer his worship in person, his prayer in his own words and speech, his sacrifice in any kind—animal, cooked food, fruit, corn or cereals—, and observe no very rigid formality. The medium, through whom any help was sought, had no differential treatment to accord. The medium might belong to any sex and even to the outcaste section of the Hindu society. No special social status is attached to him by his profession. Naturally the freedom enjoyed and the immediate fulfilment of the objective hoped for, led the mass to non-Hindu practices. The suicidal policy of the Brahmin hierarchy was thus largely responsible for diverting the majority of those professing Hinduism to non-Āryan element of worship and philosophy. This policy was, no doubt, in contrast with the marked adaptability of the Vedic Āryan race and particularly of the succeeding generations which withstood the heavy blows of Buddhists and Jains. This disintegration of the Hindu society was not without its baneful effects.

Brahminic neglect brings Bhakti cult to dominance

The main defect which led to this catastrophe was the denial of union with God. What it did make impossible for a non-Brahmin was to attain that union immediately on the cessation of his present life. He would first have to pass through higher and purer stages of mundane existence before reaching the final salvation. This obstacle in his way required to be removed and equality ensured at least in the domain of the Supreme Being. Equally important was the necessity to put a stop to the wholesale license enjoyed in the adoption of the pre-Āryan type of religion and practices. The saner and liberal element of the Hindu fold was not short of the occasion. Different cults to meet the contingency were introduced and developed. Rāmānuja by his devotion to Rāma demonstrated to his large followers that any person can attain again conscious union with Him only through devotion and love. The Bhakti cult thus came into existence. Rāmānanda's teaching made a further advance. It was designed for mass development and was of distinctly levelling and popular character. So the Bhaktamālā and other writings of his pantha or sect were composed, not in Sanskrit, but in the popular dialects. Chaitanya made a very considerable contribution to popularise this movement by his own attainments and example. A freer scope was thus allowed to the emotional and erotic elements in the forms of worship in these creeds. The use of vernacular dialects in prayers and hymns of praise was given an important place in the religious service. Music, dancing, singing parties, theatricals—in short anything calculated to produce the desired effect of the Bhakti cult was employed. Nāmdas, Doyā-

neśwar and Ekanāth helped developing this cult in Mahārāṣṭra too. Kabīr paid his quota in throwing this cult open to Muslims also. The Mahārāṣṭrian saints, however, led the movement to considerable success and effect. In the early seventeenth century, Tukārām was the foremost in making the vārakarī pantha or sect very popular both by his preachings and by the example of his own life. It is unnecessary to go into the details of the Mahānubhāva, Traimūrti (Datta) and other cults.

Aims in religious reformation

All these efforts distinctly aimed at: (a) attaining communion with God by devotion and love, (b) removing the intermediary agency for worship or for self-purification, (c) relieving devotees from the cumbersome procedure and rigidity of the māntric and tāntric formalities, (d) impressing the votaries of the fruitlessness of sacrifices, (e) curbing the tendency towards worship solely with a view to selfish gain or personal revenge, (f) securing social and religious equality, and (g) promoting mass-prayers. These are the chief lines on which a reformation was attempted. It, however, tempted the devotees to inaction and worldly renunciation, thus creating indifference to the duties and obligations to the Hindu society and religion for the effective maintenance of its order. These sects drew away a large part of the advanced Hindu society, especially from the Dwija castes, out of the pale of the influence of the Brahminism of Śaṅkarāchārya.

Castes without āchār and dharma

In the original formation of non-tribal castes, occupation was an important deciding factor, but the

exigencies of life did not allow this longer. Brahmins had to accept such professions as were not compatible with their own caste. Many remained in Muslim service much to the detriment of their own wishes and convictions. The cardinal principle on which the system of caste thus remained in existence was only the preservation of purity of descent. The peculiar religious beliefs and ceremonial usages became characteristic of each caste. The political and social influences of the non-Āryan surroundings had no small effect on these usages. Every caste, from the highest to the lowest, however, took jealous pride in its own peculiar occupation and sphere of life. Thus, though the various sub-castes of Brahmins, Shenavis, Kāyasthas, Daivadnyās, Marāṭhās, Kuṇbis, Malūrs, etc. were taking particular pride in their own calling, they inherited very little of the practices and beliefs of their ancestors. The Deśasthās, who were the leading community in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, formed a great majority, but their actual practices fell much short of the required standard of religious sanctity or piety. Other castes, having no proper guidance from Brahmins, on whom they relied, soon suffered themselves to be brought to the level of the Śūdras. The aboriginal and other local tribes were slumped together under the designation of Śūdras, who were destined to serve the upper classes in all the various departments of manual labour; but in the early part of the seventeenth century, all castes, from Brāhmins to Śūdra, could boast of no superiority over the Muslim conquerors or assert their manners and customs against the wishes of their masters. The castes were, therefore, reduced to name 'jāti' only, and the āchār and dharma were either extinguished or less practised.

Essential means for stabilizing religion

No religion would find popularity or mass-following if it only restricted itself to higher philosophy or mystic symbolism, then however congenial this refined symbolism may be. It would not satisfy the religious wants of the common man little given to abstract conceptions. For adherence to any faith or religion of the mass, three instruments are, therefore, most essential : (a) institution—temples or other symbolic objects, (b) priest or ministrant to guide or to regulate the performances of the religious practices, and (c) periodical religious practices—saṃskārās, prayers, worships, observances, etc. The Muslim persecution did not allow free scope to rebuild temples or to establish any seats of learning for the dissemination of religious knowledge or for the initiation of the young and enquiring mind in the practices of devotion, self-purification or immolation. A stray temple or two on hills were not likely to satisfy the need. The priesthood was vested in Jośīs or Jyotiśīs. The order had lost all the support of the State and its traditional rights and privileges were either in dispute or dismissed. No effective guidance was, therefore, obtainable to all those, especially the non-Brahmin castes, who solely depended on them. In the absence of this technical help, it was practically impossible for them to perform the various saṃskārās and ceremonies and other devotional observances which should confirm the moral and spiritual impression on their mind so that their firm and blind adherence to the faith could be counted upon. In short, in the early part of the seventeenth century the Hindu community in Mahārāṣṭra was not only without the adequate facility of temples and technical guidance but also remained without undergoing the proper and usual saṃs-

kārās according to the Hindu religion.³

Bhonslas lost all Rajput āchār and dharma

By tradition, Bhonsalās belonged to the Rajaput clan. The Upadhye family, later distinguished as the ' Paṇḍita-rāo Rājopādhe ' family, was the hereditary Purohit-Upādhyes of Bhonsalās. How long this connection can go back will depend upon the new historical evidence, if disclosed. The Bhonsalā branch of Mudhol had, however, nobody of this family in its employ. The ancestors of the Bhonsalā families arrived in the Deccan before the

3. Kavindra Paramānanda writes :—"नाहूयन्ते द्विविधो न हूयन्ते हुताशनाः । न वेदो अप्यधीयन्ते नाभ्यर्च्यन्ते द्विजातयः ॥ ४० ॥ न सत्राणि प्रवर्तन्ते तथैव च मखक्रियाः । न दानानि विधीयन्ते विहीयन्ते व्रताणि च ॥ ४१ ॥ खिद्यन्ते साधवस्सर्वे भिद्यन्ते धर्मसतेवः । म्लेच्छधर्माः प्रपान्ते हन्यन्ते धेनवोऽपि च ॥ ४२ ॥ सज्जना यान्ति विलयं व्रजन्ति क्षत्रियाः क्षयम् । प्रादुर्भूतमिदानीं मे यवनेभ्यो महद्भयम् ॥ ४३ ॥" *Adhyāya* 5, p. 44, "Śivabhārat". In "Viśvagūṇādarśa-ṣaṃpū", written in the early part of the 17th century, we find : "कृष्णानुः—...अधुना किल कलिमालिन्यादीदृशीरीतिरेतद्देशवासिनामान् ॥ ४३ ॥ कृष्णानु-अपरैर्व्यापारैरहरिह नयन्तोऽशनदशास्वय याताः संयां विदधाति न जानु स्वसमये ॥ त्यजन्तः स्वां वृत्तिं द्विजकुलभवा ग्रामगणही । भवन्तो हन्तारो कथमपि च जीवान्ति बहवः ॥ १३३ ॥ किञ्च—'उपनयनविवाहाद्युत्तरात्प्रधानी । कलिविभवत एषां कालभेदानभिज्ञा ॥ विजहति न कदाचिद्व्याधौ ह्योषे । वयसि च यवनानां वाचनाभ्यासमेते ॥ १३४ ॥ अपि च । अज्ञानां मरिचम लौकिकवनोभाजामर्माणां पुन- । मन्त्रोच्चारण एव पर्यवसिते मरुतयो कर्मसु ॥ ... ॥ १३५ ॥ चेद्व्यासः स इह दृष्टो यो वेद विजगदपि । भवति त्वेकं परिपठति यः स स्वयं जीव एव ॥ आत्मान्यः न हि कदापि भ्यगोपारानं यः । कष्टं शिष्टमतिक्रुति कदा सारं मुञ्चति विदुः ॥ १३६ ॥ ..."—p. 84-7, Chapter 12, *Mahārāṣṭra-vamānam*, "Viśvagūṇādarśa-ṣaṃpū" by Vyaṅkatādhwari edited by B. G. Yashwantrao, Bombay 1899.

middle of the fourteenth century.⁴ Thus, the seven direct generations prior to Raghunātha Paṇḍitarāo given in the Paṇḍitrāo genealogy⁵ as covering the long period of over 300 years is an improbability. It is also unlikely that the hereditary family priests would ever permit such a wholesale change in the religious practices of the Bhonsalā family as should humiliate it to a status considerably lower than what was enjoyed by it as Rajaputs in Udepur.⁶ No importance can, therefore, be appropriately attached to this family as wielding any influence on the conduct of, and the tendencies exhibited by, Bhonsalās prior to 1600 A.D. Bābājī Bhonsalā granted an acre and a quarter of a chāvar of land to the Ārvi branch of the family. His sons, Mālojī and Viṭhojī, as Sargurhos or Mokadams of the country, confirmed it. But this does not establish any close connection between these two families. The grant was, and had to be continued by every succeeding Muslim or Hindu officer, which indicates that the nature of the grant was not personal

4. Farmāns of 4th November 1352 and 22nd October 1471—pp. 1 and 16, Appendix, pp. 25 and 84, Introduction, "Mudhoḷa Samsthānachyā Ghorapaḍe Gharāṇyāchā Itihāsa" edited by Mr. D. V. Apte, Poona, 1934.

5. See Appendix I, p. 70, "Dandānītiprakaraṇam" by Mr. V. S. Bendrey. [note 1].

6. Rājā Jayasing in his letter of January 1666 to Jāfar Khān writes: ".... —regardless of praise or blame by other people, that if the Emperor sanctions it, I shall set on foot a proposal for a match with his family and settle the marriage of my son with his daughter,—though the pedigree and caste of Shiva are notoriously low and men like me do not eat food touched by his hand (not to speak of entering into a matrimonial connection with him),"—f. 139a, Haft Anjuman; p. 306, "R. G. Bhāṇḍārkar Commemoration Volume", B. O. R. Institute, Poona, 1917.

but official. In no communication, the family is called Upādhye or Rājopādhye before 1630 A.D.⁷ Prabhākara-bhaṭa of this branch of the family attended Śāhājī at Bangalore, and it is only probable that Śāhājī's name and fame attracted him to his service. The later connection between these two families, however, yielded a great and continued influence on the religious and social policy of the Marāṭhā Kings.

Shiva or Bhavani Worship in Bhonsla family

Mālojī named his two sons after the well known Pīrs Śāha and Śarīfa—of Ahmednagar. This is indicative of the religious bend of his mind. His devotion to Śiva after the sudden find of a treasure-trove may either be emotional or traditional, but his constructing a tank and repairing the old and renowned Yādavakālīna temple of Śiva at Śikhara-śingānāpur does not lessen the significance of the hint for the valuable discovery coming from Goddess Bhavānī. In fact, both the brothers and their father were Mokadams or Sargurhos of the country round about, and Viṭhojī is mentioned as the Mokadam of Śikhara-śingānāpur itself. Viṭhojī and his sons, though they shared the find of Mālojī, exhibited no great zeal for Śiva worship.

Shahaji a Shaiwait : Dravidian influence

Śāhājī had, however, developed a considerable and undivided devotion to Śiva. Mālojī's later actions and conduct may have initiated him to it, but his association

7. Śāhājī's grant is dated 24th December 1597. This and subsequent letters have been published in "Rājawāde Khaṇḍa 15" under "Papers of Rājopādhye Family."

with Murār Jagadevarāo, a very great devotee of Śiva, must have left a very deep effect on his mind inclining him to the higher form of Hindu worship and refined mode of life. His contact with the learned Paṇḍits at the Nizāmśāhī capital and in the South was very great and manifold, and it is no wonder if Śāhājī and his wife Jijābāi had acquired the true conception of Hindu religion as understood and believed by the learned Brahmins. His succession to the Nāyakas in the Kaṇṇāṭak was the best opportunity to inherit the Hindu procedure and practices of the courts, which were, no doubt, adopted to suit the higher form of worship and conduct of social life. Śāhājī's assertion in his letter of 1656 A.D.⁸ that he belonged to the Rajaput clan (अराजपूत लोक) indirectly expresses how the inferiority complex was vexing his mind and reflects on his feelings about the deterioration in the conduct of life of his own kinsmen both socially and politically. Anyhow, the Tanjore line of the Bhonsalā family showed greater mind and energy for religious learning and literature. Jijābāi conveyed to her son Śivājī all the culture and conventions of Śāhājī's court. The officers, who accompanied Śivājī to Poona, did not, however, possess the same sentiments as were entertained by Śāhājī.

Shahaji and Jijabai : Shivaji's preceptors in religion and politics

Śivājī inherited many of his social and religious beliefs and prejudices from his parents. He had given expression to his devotion to Sāmbha and Āmbā in

8. Letter dated 1666 July, p. 209, "Śhrī Sāmpradāyāchī Kāgadpatre", Vividha Viśaya, Lekhāṅka No. 34, Rāmdās āṇi Rāmadāsi.

several of his letters. His devotion to Goddess Bhavānī or Ambā was, however, undivided and absolute. His faith in Her guidance in all his early adventures was implicit. This guidance he got directly through his being possessed of the spirit of the Goddess. It is true Rāyareśvar was chosen to be the place for oaths of fidelity to Hindavī Swarājya, but this was due more to the reverence for the idol among the people from the country around.⁹

Shivaji gives up retaliation against Muslim religion

In his early activities, he exhibited some aggressive spirit against the Muslim faith and pulled down certain mosques at Kalyāna and Bhivandī and imprisoned Mullās there.¹⁰ This was, of course, prompted not through any destructive element in his policy, but as a retribution for causing disgrace to his father by deceit and imprisonment. He, however, soon discovered the futility of such a destructive element in his action against his foe.

Remnants of true Hindu culture in the Konkan

Śirkes and Dalvīs of Śringārpur, Saṅgameśvar and

9. Jedhes of Kāri had their adherents sworn similarly in 1618 A.D.—Lekhana 336, Letter of Malik Ambar of 25th November 1618. “Śivacharitra (Sāhitya Khaṇḍa, 2” B.I.S. Maṇḍaḷa Svīyamālā, Poona.

10. “अफजुल उवाच...त्वया गृहीत्वा कल्याणं तथा भीमपुरीमपि । यवनानां महासिद्धिनिलयाः किल पातिताः ॥ ५२ ॥ निगृह्य यवनाचार्यानि-चार्यात्मनो बलम् । प्रतिवध्नास्यविद्वानामध्वानमकुतोभयः ॥ ५४ ॥” —Adhyāya 18, “Śivabhārata” by Paramānanda, edited by Messrs. D. V. Apte and S. M. Divekar, B. I. S. Mandāl, Poona.

Rājāpur enjoyed absolute freedom by their being placed in a particular situation of the country and natural defence. Many Brahmin families preserved their Brahminic culture in those hilly tracts. Śivājī captured these places in 1660-61. He thus came in contact with the learned Brahmins more closely. Raghunāthabhaṭa joined his service immediately after this. Some time later Gāgābhaṭa, who had arrived in 1663-4 in Mahārāṣṭra, made good impression on him. Paramānanda, Anantadev and others were also there and met Śivājī. A progressive and rational religious outlook was the natural outcome of all these acquaintances. A revival of the old Hindu religion and the raising of the social status of all the communities became his immediate objectives. To achieve these objectives, it was necessary (a) to reintroduce the old ancient practices, (b) to give encouragement to temples and saintly personalities, (c) to restore the Jośi or priestly institution, and (d) to appoint a learned Paṇḍit, who would command respect and awe and guide the Hindu community as a whole towards progressive culture and refinement.

Shivaji introduces extreme social reforms

Śivājī was successful in removing the obstacles in the way of Devarukhe and other Brāhmins, and also in restoring their ancient rights and privileges of Śoḍaśasamśkārās to all the other Dvija castes—Śheṇavīs, Chāndrasenīya Kāyasthās, Mārāṭhās, and so on. For all this, a reference to the Benares Brahmins was obligatory. No wholesale reformation was possible without the backing of the best intellect of the country and unless an effective and direct control over the executive was exercised by the state or the king. Śankarāchārya had no jurisdiction

in Mahārāṣṭra, and Śivājī's own person was not competent to exercise this jurisdiction over the whole of the Hindu community. In Raghunāthapaṇḍita, however, he secured a very strong, firm and learned Brahmin to execute his authority. He made him Paṇḍitarāo in 1665 A.D. Raghunāthapaṇḍita, in his own way, most successfully executed Śivājī's religious and social policy. The opposition of a small minority of Brahmin officers and bhikṣukās at the capital made no effect whatever on the masses. Śivājī, on the other hand, could use no royal prerogatives. He won to his side the best intellect and a willing executive. With these two weapons, he not only defeated the opposition but subjected it to meek submission and service. No one could stand in argument the person of so eminent and recognised an authority as Gāgābhaṭa or Anantadeva. It was equally impossible to stop Jośīs from executing Śivājī's will preferring sacrifice of their vṛitti rights which were then newly restored to them. Śivājī treated liberally and with due honour and respect all saints, temples and creeds alike. All of them readily supported his cause.

Coronation : democratic institution : sanction to leadership

By coronation, Śivājī not only maintained his own right to Dvijatwa and to the sceptre of the kingdom, but he became endowed with the competence and sanction to exercise the jurisdiction of a Hindu king in religious and social matters over all castes and creeds. Śivājī commenced issuing orders under his own seal and name.¹¹

11. Vide letter of 28th January 1677 reproduced on pp. 154-55, "Grāmaṇyāchā Sādyanta Itihāsa" by K. S. Thackarey, Bombay, 1919, etc.

Advent of Tantric School in Maharashtra

The coronation, however, brought in another unexpected influence. The pure vedic prayers hinted at no harm for either omission or commission in any performance. The t̃āntricism, however, introduced in the vedic worship all kinds of threats of divine infliction for whatever mistakes committed in his vidhis. Counter performances were devised to avert the divine anger for such and other failures. Any calamity befallen immediately after a performance was construed as a divine infliction for some remissness either on the part of the devotee or the priest. God-fearing persons often showed greater weakness by their suspicion or anticipation of some trouble through their lack of confidence in the perfect conduct of the performance. Even in the vidhi itself, at every stage, the person is made conscious of such omissions by the priest in imploring mercy for them. The whole system of the Hindu-worship was influenced by the t̃āntric ceremonies. Śaṅkarāchārya was perhaps the great supporter of this cult. The cult developed particularly in the seventeenth century and by the end of the first quarter of the eighteenth century Bhāskarāchārya brought out the best literature on the subject. This, however, marks the climax of the t̃āntric cult.

Mishaps at the Coronation inclined Shivaji to Tantricism

Gāgābhāṭa performed the coronation ceremony with all the sacred and Vedokta mantrās¹² and, according to

12. "Rājābhiśeka-prayoga" by Gāgābhāṭa—a ms. in the Bikaner Mss. Library. [note 2].

13. "Śrī-Śivarājyābhiśeka-Kalpataru" by Nischalapuri. [note 2].

his convictions and beliefs, the ceremony was perfect. Unfortunately, calamities preceded and followed the coronation. The tāntricians attributed them to certain omissions and commissions in the Rājābhīṣeka vidhi. Suddenly overwhelmed with severe and manifold calamities, Śivāji gave way and allowed himself to be treated against the divine anger. The jāpakās took advantage of this to undo the śāstric influence of Gāgā. They administered a second coronation and it was immediately arranged for. In doing so, the jāpakās undid everything of the former ceremony, even the sirphāsana, so ceremoniously and publicly installed, was dismantled and replaced by another of their making and pattern.¹³ Thus the purely vedic conception of the dharma was considered to be too inadequate for his aims and achievements. The jāpakās actually initiated Śivāji to the tantra practices and mystic mantrās characteristic of their cult. The royal example was followed by the people. Thus the Devī cult came again into prominence. Śivāji's rapid progress brought him to the final stage of the tapas, and he was inspired to present his head in sacrifice to Śivaśakti (Śrīśailamallikārjuna), and thus to seek rebirth and extraordinary power which that offering alone brings to the devotee. He was, however, persuaded to give up the hazardous attempt.¹⁴

Influence of Japakas on the Bhonsala family

Sambhāji followed the footsteps of his father with perhaps more zeal and vigour. His period was full of struggle and strife. Extraordinary power and great deter-

14. This incident took place during Śivāji's incursion into the Karmāṭak in 1677-8 at Śrī-śail-mallikārjuna, one of the twelve famous Jyotirlingās.—p. 89, "Sabhāsadi Bakhar", etc.

mination was the need of the day. The great enemy was at his doors and had practically surrounded his Rājya. It is no wonder if he loved to celebrate all the ceremonies of the Goddess to acquire the protection of the divine or "śakti" power. There was, however, no change in the religious policy and Moreśvar Paṇḍitrāo and others continued to do the work as before. Rājārām and the Kolhāpur line were also under the jāpakā influence. The Satara line of Śivājī, however, escaped that influence. No one can, however, with justice mix this jāpakā cult with the Śākta mārṅa or cult, which later spread in the country.

No titles, but power and status to the
executives

Śivājī bestowed honours and positions on men of eminence and merit. The distinctions like the use of seals, pālkhī, chāmars, were introduced. The social status of the people was thus raised. Appropriate distinction based on merits helped the society to rise to ambition and action.

Ramdas's disciples failed to promote his
splendid mission

Side by side, Tukārām's teaching was giving a good impetus to the lower class of the society to lift themselves to self-purification and to a higher social level. Rāmadās tried to remedy the defects in the wārkarī sāmpradāya by preparing men to action and duty to the community at large, but failed to make his sect popular. It grew with the limited sphere of highest castes. This limitation led to its early extinction. Śivājī fostered the Māruti or Hanumān worship of Rāmadās and withdrew a large part of the mass from its attraction to the lower

type of grāma-devatās. At any rate, Rāmadāsa's followers failed to impress on the mass the precious teachings in the "Dāsabodha".

Reconversion : a State policy

The policy of reconversion was much stressed in Śivājī's period and greater still in Saṃbhājī's time. The need was great especially to combat the ill-effects created through the helplessness of the victims to regain their social standing among their own kith and kin and particularly through the advantages taken by the other bigots of their abandonment by the Hindu society. Later, this policy, however, assumed a political exigency and reconversions were ordered to the communities concerned rather than left optional to the will of either the Brahmins to purify or the communities to accept restoration. Śivājī was very particular, so also Saṃbhājī, in getting the European powers to treat and agree not to allow conversion by their Missionaries of even the Hindu orphans. Śivājī thus declared conversion a crime, but reconversion a moral duty of the king. The Missionaries, however, did continue their sacred influence and religious respect among the masses in their own territory. Saṃbhājī retaliated all the affronts given by them, and revengefully despoiled all the respect they commanded in his campaign against the Portuguese. His conversion of churches into Devī temples and destruction of nunneries and monasteries definitely uprooted all the influence and awe of the Missionaries from the minds of the masses in the coastal parts of the Konkan.

Rajaram's weak administration

Rājārām's actions were more clothed with charity

and piety rather than political or religious zeal. The cheaply secured gifts and donations by the people from him, while at Jiñjī, often interfered with the actual administration of the Mahratta country under Rāmachandrapanta and Śaṅkarājī Nārāyaṇa. It was difficult to give practical effect to all such orders and royal commands.

Shivaji a great patron of literature and learning

There was a distinct growth in the religious and social literature. The seats of Hindu learning at Paithāṇa and Karāḍa were restored and religious disputes sent there for decision. "Karaṇakaustubha" was prepared to help Jośis and Jyotiśis in their daily calculations. "Govindabhaṭṭī" by Govindabhaṭa Khedkar, "Śyenavī-jātinīṇṇaya", "Kāyasthadharmapradīpa", "Kāyasthadharmadīpa" by Gāgābhaṭa, "Smṛtikaustubha" by Anantadeva, "Śūdrakamalākara", "Jātivivekasindhu" and others by Kamalākarabhaṭa were compiled specially at the instance of Śivājī to enable him to end the disputes then arisen. "Rājābhišekaprayoga", "Samayanaya" "Tulādānaprayoga" and others by Gāgābhaṭa, "Śrī-rājyābhišekakalpataru" by Nischalpurī determine the procedure and performance of the coronation ceremony. "Vyavahāranīṇṇaya", "Vratodyota", "Śivārkodaya", "Piṇḍapitrūyajñyaprayoga", "Prayogasāra", etc. by Gāgābhaṭa, "Dharmakalpalatā" by Keśavapaṇḍita, "Budhabhūṣana" by Saṁbhājī and some others guide the social and religious conduct of life. The works like "Śivabhūṣana" by Bhūṣaṇakavi, "Śrīsaṁbhupratāpa" by Harikavi, "Rājāramacharitam" by Keśavapaṇḍita etc. describe the personal life of the Marāṭhā Kings. Many more Sanskrit works on miscellaneous subjects such as

"Bhajanatutuhala" by Raghūnātha Navahasta, were compiled under the Marāṭhā patronage. The Marāṭhī literature produced in the Śivasāhī period is perhaps the best of its kind.¹⁵ The inspirational writings of Tukārām, Rāmadas and other saints and poets left a permanent stamp on the Marāṭhī literature of their graceful but simple style and richness of thought. Perhaps the seventeenth century was the period of stabilisation and refinement of the language.

Shivaji : Founder of Hindavi Swarajya : great political, social and religious reformer

In brief, within the short period of twenty-five years, Śivājī founded a kingdom, which his grandson Śāhū soon saw grown into a great empire. Śivājī educated the masses in the arts of administration and war. Śivājī, by awakening the masses to their rights and privileges, created a formidable power which protected them from foreign aggression and prevented their culture and religion from ruin. Śivājī was, thus to his country and people, a great reformer or rather liberator of the masses from the bonds of the orthodox and shortsighted Brahmin hierarchy, whose disastrous folly was drifting the Hīndu religion and its true culture and philosophy to ruin and disgrace. It is true, the poor soil permitted no great advance in fine arts and grandeur ; but Śivājī by his example infused the national spirit in the Mahrāṭṭā people which contributed greatly to the advancement of their

15. Pp. 44-73 Mahārāṣṭrīyānche Kāvya-parīkṣaṇa athavā Mahārāṣṭrīya Vāṅmayābhīruchīchya Itihāsāntīla eka prakaraṇa, Vibhāga pahilā, Britīśa-satte-pūrvichā Kāla by Dr. Śrīdhar Vyākaṭeśa Ketkar, Poona, 1928.

social and religious culture and also to the rapid and sound progress in their learning and literature. The great name of Śivājī has still the dynamic force to inflame patriotism among the masses and to awaken them to their right of Śwarājya—National Government.